

OUTCOME

GOAL 3.4 - REDUCE EXPLOITATION OF CHILD LABOR AND ADDRESS CORE INTERNATIONAL LABOR STANDARDS

Overview

Public awareness of abusive child labor and violations of workers' basic rights has increased dramatically in recent years. According to the International Labor Organization (ILO), as many as 250 million children under the age of 15 world-wide are employed full- or part-time, and millions of adult workers are denied their basic labor rights. The United States views exploitative child labor and the denial of internationally recognized workers' rights as abuses of human rights, and as impediments to broad-based, sustainable economic development. To combat these abuses and make a difference in the lives of workers in FY 2000, the U.S. contributed close to \$30 million to the ILO's International Program for the Elimination of Child Labor (IPEC).

The Department also launched a \$20 million initiative with the ILO to help protect workers' basic rights, and a \$10 million program implemented directly by DOL to economically empower workers through development of stable labor markets. To gain support for these objectives, DOL has an active outreach program to American businesses, non-governmental organizations, and trade unions.

Serving the Public

The Department's Bureau of International Labor Affairs has been instrumental in funding projects to promote the progressive elimination of child labor by raising awareness about the issue; documenting its extent and nature; removing children from exploitative work situations; and providing them with educational opportunities. These projects also provide income-generating opportunities to families of former child laborers, and work to prevent continuing recruitment of children into work. Additional initiatives to protect the basic rights of workers focus on labor law reform; strengthening the administration of labor law; improving the capacity of employers and workers to prevent and resolve disputes; strengthening pension and social security systems; and facilitating the employment of dislocated workers.

Challenges

Poverty is frequently cited as a major cause of child labor. Other factors also need to be addressed, such as the degree to which working children have access to affordable, quality schooling. Addressing these needs simultaneously and in a sustainable way requires collaboration and coordination among different organizations.

The 1998 Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work commits 174 member countries to respect four principles embodied by ILO "core" conventions: freedom of association and collective bargaining; elimination of forced labor; elimination of exploitative child labor; and non-discrimination in employment. The Declaration recognizes that all ILO member nations, whether or not they have ratified the conventions, have an obligation to respect these fundamental workers' rights.

REDUCE CHILD LABOR IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Goal 3.4A: Progressively reduce exploitative child labor worldwide by increasing international support and funding of the most promising programs and projects in targeted countries.

Results: The goal was fully achieved. The Department targeted four performance indicators to measure success against this goal for FY 2000. The 109,000 children targeted for prevention or removal from exploitative work significantly exceeded the goal of 50,000 children. The three supporting indicators were also achieved.

Program Description: The International Labor Organization (ILO)'s International Program on the Elimination of Child Labor (IPEC) was created in 1992 to implement technical cooperation activities in countries with significant numbers of working children. The program is funded through voluntary contributions of ILO member Nations. In FY 2000, the Department of Labor again provided \$30 million to support the IPEC program. By supporting IPEC projects, DOL through its Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB) seeks to withdraw children from exploitative work, while preventing at-risk children from entering child labor situations. Through its funding and advocacy, DOL encourages countries to join IPEC and increase their capacity to address the problem of child labor.

Analysis of Results:

- 50,000 children targeted for prevention and removal from exploitative work

Preventing Child Labor or Removing Children from Exploitative Work			
Indicator	FY 1999	FY 2000 Goal	FY 2000 Result
Children <i>targeted</i> for removal from exploitative work	--	50,000	109,000
Countries ratifying ILO Convention 182	1	Increase over FY 99	36
IPEC National Action Plans	1	Increase over FY 99	2
Reports, publications, website	1 Report, other publications, website	Increase awareness	1 Report, other publications, website

DOL-funded programs targeted 109,000 children for prevention or removal from exploitative work, while seeking to enhance the educational alternatives available to these children and economic opportunities for their families. Program data are obtained from project and program documents provided in proposals, and agreed to by the ILO. There is monitoring of children removed to ensure that they are not returned to hazardous work.

This young girl on Mindanao in the Philippines cuts green bananas to make dried banana chips.

Photo by: Kevin Willcutts
USDOL/ILAB



- **Increase number of countries ratifying International Labor Organization (ILO) Convention 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labor**

A total of 37 countries ratified ILO Convention 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labor, reflecting positively on DOL efforts at advocacy in this area and demonstrating the growing international commitment to end exploitative child labor. This Convention was unanimously adopted by the delegates to the International Labor Conference in June 1999. Prior to this fiscal year, only one country (the Seychelles) had ratified the convention.



Boy making surgical instruments in Pakistan.
Photo from: USDOL/ILAB archive

- **Increase number of IPEC National Action Plans**

DOL funded two additional IPEC National Action Plans in FY 2000, one in South Africa and the other in Yemen. Additionally, DOL funded seven IPEC projects targeting child labor in specific economic sectors; and five IPEC projects addressing

child labor regionally. These projects aim to enhance the capacity of these countries to address the problem of exploitative child labor, provide educational opportunities for children withdrawn from child labor situations, and reduce the dependence of parents on child labor by supporting income-generating alternatives to child labor.

The Department also determined the success of this goal based on the number of countries signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with IPEC, since this number indicates support among countries for taking action to address child labor. The MOUs are formal written understandings between the ILO and governments. They can also include other principals such as industry, labor, and other international organizations. National Action Plans grow out of MOUs as country programs are developed, and identify concrete actions taken by different parties on behalf of working children.

- **Increase awareness through reports, other publications, and website on exploitative child labor disseminated by ILAB**

DOL also published its sixth report on international child labor, *By the Sweat & Toil of Children: An Economic Consideration of Child Labor*. The Department's ILAB website provides information on child labor issues. Also in the area of raising awareness, ILAB funded a Global Campaign/Best Practices Conference with speakers from Africa, Asia, and Latin America sharing their experiences in working to address child labor issues.

Strategies:

The Department's strategies for eliminating exploitative child labor focus on collaborative international efforts to find effective solutions, including:

- Enlisting the participation of more countries in IPEC's technical assistance programs;
- Developing statistical surveys and baseline information to assess future progress in reducing child labor;
- Supporting programs that encourage innovative partnerships between governments, industry, workers, and non-governmental organizations which address the problem of child labor; and
- Removing children from work and providing them with educational opportunities and their parents with viable economic alternatives.

Goal Assessment: Additional countries may seek IPEC membership in the near future. With major projects to assist exploited and at-risk children now in progress, this goal has been revised for FY 2001 to add measures reflecting the anticipated program outcomes and results on behalf of these children. Other FY 2001 performance targets will help assess the extent to which public awareness about the plight of working children rises and international support to combat child labor increases.

Audits and Evaluations: The OIG performed a program evaluation on the Child Labor Program. The review highlighted the substantial increase in ILAB's appropriations during the last two fiscal years and emphasized the need for strengthening the current management structure, controls, and



evaluation methods, to provide adequate accountability for this level of funding and made recommendations for further strengthening the program. The Child Labor Program has effectively addressed the OIG recommendations, including producing an Operations Manual for staff that details the program's Mission, Program Areas and Goals; Guidelines for Technical Cooperation, Research and Communications; and Administrative and Office Procedures. See Appendix 3, for further information on this evaluation. ■

This young child, although too small to reach the blackboard without a platform, had already worked for one year when he became a participant in the Rugmark- Nepal Non-Formal School for former carpet weavers.

Photo by: Shirley Smith

Amna was born to a family in Pakistan that could not afford the cost of a required school uniform and shoes. Not past her tenth birthday, Amna's life work was stitching soccer balls. She had never known a childhood without work. Today, Amna has learned to read and write in her native language and to differentiate letters in the English alphabet. That is because of DOL's support of the International Labor Organization's International Program on the Elimination of Child Labor (ILO/IPEC). With ILO/IPEC funds, Amna's family was able to send her to school and find other sources of income to provide the basic necessities. Amna plans to stay in school and, what's more, she is determined that her younger siblings will never have to stitch soccer balls.



Photo from: USDOL/ILAB archive